

Baltimore City

Code Red Heat Alert Plan

July 2006

SUMMARY

Baltimore City's Code Red Heat Alert activation provides for a coordinated approach to providing cooling relief to seniors and vulnerable populations in Baltimore City during a heat crisis in the summer months.

STANDARD

The Health Commissioner declares a Code Red Heat Alert day during periods of extreme heat. In making the decision, the Health Commissioner will take into account 1) whether the National Weather Service has issued a heat advisory; and 2) whether the Baltimore Heat Health Watch Warning System (a protocol developed by the University of Delaware) has issued a heat advisory or an excessive heat warning.

The decision to activate Code Red Heat Alert on a particular day will be made before 6 am of that day, if possible. Health will send out a press release announcing Code Red Heat Alert status. Health will also notify the 311 Call Center, Fire, Police, the Mayor's Office, and the Office of Emergency Management. Individuals unsure of whether Code Red Heat Alert is in effect can call the City's 311 Call Center for details.

SERVICES

The specific list of services activated will be included in the day's press release. The initial services to be offered are listed below.

1. Shelter

The Housing Department will open the following 6 cooling centers in daytime hours to provide cooling relief to seniors and homeless persons:

- Eastern Community Action Center -- 1400 Orleans Street
- Northern Community Action Center -- 5225 York Road
- Southern Community Action Center -- 606 Cherry Hill Road (inside the shopping center 2nd floor)
- Northwest Community Action Center -- 3314 Ayrdale Avenue
- Western Community Action Center -- 1133 Pennsylvania Avenue
- Southeastern Community Action Center -- 3411 Bank Street

The Commission on Aging and Retirement Education will open the following four senior centers:

- Waxter Center -- 1000 Cathedral Street
- Oliver Center -- 1700 Gay Street
- Sandtown-Winchester Center -- 1601 Baker Street
- Hatton Center -- 2825 Fait Avenue

Each center will offer air-conditioned space and cold water for citizens in need. Information regarding the number and location of cooling centers will be made available through local media, and will also be given to 311 operators. Additional cooling centers can be opened in the event that more sites are needed.

2. Communication

311 operators will provide cooling center locations, safety tips and information about warning signs for heat-related morbidity. They will also attempt to link residents in need of transportation to cooling centers with available transportation programs, including CARE's TaxiCard voucher program.

3. Outreach

- Department of Housing and Community Development.
 - On-call staff will increase their usual outreach efforts to vulnerable residents.
- Commission on Aging and Retirement Education
 - CARE will issue email alerts to senior serving organizations throughout the city instructing them to advise older adults to keep cool and safe, advise seniors of the harmful effects of the extreme heat, and encourage seniors to seek shelter in cooling centers.
- Health Department
 - Health will inform the public about ways to stay safe and healthy during periods of extreme heat via the media and 311 line.
- Police Department
 - The Police Department will do random checks of seniors in their data file throughout the summer. On Code Red Heat Alert days, patrol officers will give special attention to cooling centers.
- Fire Department
 - During late spring through summer, Fire will distribute heat safety and energy assistance information as a part of its normal day-to-day operations/home visits.
 - During an extreme or prolonged heat emergency, Fire will work with Housing to distribute heat safety tips and information about energy assistance, fans and/or AC units to targeted populations.
- Baltimore Homeless Services
 - On Code Red Heat Alert days, water will be distributed to homeless persons by outreach teams from mental health services and Baltimore Homeless Services, and by the Downtown Partnership Safety Guides.

Health Care for the Homeless, Our Daily Bread, Beans and Bread Outreach Center and the Oasis Drop in Center will also distribute water at their sites.